

The Board does not retry any case, but can use a wealth of information when considering a release. The Iowa code (904A.4) includes the authority for the Board to interview offenders, and directs that the Board adopt administrative rules to determine factors when considering a parole. Those factors include the Board's right to consider previous criminal record, nature and circumstance of the offense, recidivism, convictions, psychiatric evaluations, time served, institutional record, success or failure while on probation, history of chemicals, general attitude, and risk assessment. By law (901.9) the trial judge, and prosecuting attorney are to furnish the Board with a full statement of their recommendations relating to release, and the defense attorney may. Also by law (915.18) the Board must listen to the opinion of registered victims. Although not legally required to, the Board also reviews all letters of support on behalf of the offender. In cases of commutation, the law (914.3) directs the Board to do a careful investigation and provide a recommendation to the Governor.

There is an appeal process for offenders, however it does not apply to those seeking commutation. All others may file an appeal, in writing, within 10 days of receiving their decision. This process is explained in Chapter 15 of the Board's administrative rules. Last year the Board reviewed over 500 appeals. The administrative rules are quite explicit about the grounds must be for a successful appeal.

Hope this helps.